

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2 and 7-10 are pending. By this Amendment, the features of claims 4 and 6 have been incorporated into claims 1 and 2, respectively, and claims 4 and 6 have been canceled.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issues requiring further search and/or consideration; (c) do not present any additional claims; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 4 and 6-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph and 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 2 have been amended in order to clarify the claims and to correspond to the description on page 13, line 23 to page 16, line 4 and Figs. 4-6 of Applicant's specification. It is respectfully requested that the rejections be withdrawn.

The rejections of claims 1, 2, 7, 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Foster, U.S. Patent No. 5,857,140, claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over JP 07-232082 (JP '082), claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over JP 1-119820 (JP '820), claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over JP 61-66610 (JP '610), and claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over JP 10-231722 (JP '722), have been rendered moot by the incorporation of features from claims 4 and 6 into claims 1 and 2, respectively.

Claims 4, 6 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Foster, and claims 2, 4 and 6-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over JP '082, JP '820, JP '610 or JP '722 in view of Foster. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

None of the applied references disclose or suggest an exhaust emission control system with a high-density portion disposed within a catalyst substance and downstream in an

exhaust gas flow direction from a notched portion, as recited in claims 1 and 2. By using the high-density portion, the temperature rising speed of the entire catalyst substance increases and the exhaust emission control system is thus improved (page 22, lines 11 and 12 of Applicant's specification).

Page 9, paragraph 14, of the Office Action appears to assert that using a high-density portion would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

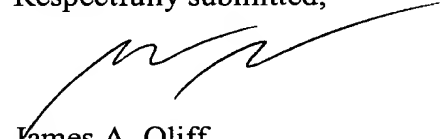
Foster discloses a catalytic converter 10 having an oval shaped housing 12 that terminates at edges 14 (col. 4, lines 24-28). The catalytic converter 10 also includes a catalyst substrate 18 with concave faces 20, 22 that prevent hot exhaust gasses from flowing directly into a mat 24 so as to improve the durability of the mat 24 (col. 5, lines 52-61). One of ordinary skill in the art would thus not be motivated to use a high density portion in Foster because Foster teaches away from diverting hot exhaust gases to the mat 24 (which occurs by using a high density portion).

The remaining applied references fail to overcome the deficiencies of Foster in disclosing or suggesting the high-density portion. It is respectfully requested that the rejections be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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